

Tennessee Growth Readiness Program
EPA Region 4 - Atlanta

Geographic location or area of activity: Over 275 of Tennessee's 480-plus cities and counties

Description of activity: The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), along with several partners, developed and promotes the Tennessee Growth Readiness Program. The program provides information and tools that empower local officials to influence and manage urban growth in their communities. Tools are introduced through a series of workshops that draw together a diverse group of stakeholders; including local government officials, developers, business owners, grass root organizations and citizens. The workshop series focuses on: explaining the importance of water quality; building awareness of water quality and land use issues; complying with regulatory requirements; making informed decisions about how to grow the community without jeopardizing water resources; evaluating current development rules; and leading a consensus-building process for creating and adopting new development rules and planning practices.

Over the past two years, planners and public works officials from over 275 of Tennessee's 480-plus cities and counties have participated in the program. Of these, 200 have evaluated their existing development rules against nationally recognized development principles, and more than 40 have made changes to their codes, ordinances and zoning to incorporate these principles. Neighboring states are also interested. Partners in Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia are adopting or piloting training programs in their communities that are based on Growth Readiness. Wise and Tazewell counties in Virginia have already completed the workshop series and other Virginia counties are planning to initiate the workshop series in the future.

Interagency partners: Tennessee Department of Agriculture; Tennessee Valley Authority; Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development

Local partners: Southeast Watershed Forum